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Sunday, 23 Dec 2012



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Feature Focus - December 2012



Southeast Conference Joins with Other Conferences in Southern Region to Explore Collaboration



On November 2, representatives of the four United Church of Christ conferences in the Southern Region – the Southern, Southeast, Florida, and South-Central conferences -- gathered for a two-conference in Orlando. Each conference brought its minister and moderator, vice moderator, an another leader. The Southeast Conference was represented by our moderator, Jim Crabb; vice-moderator, Jennifer Austin; and Marvin Morgan of the Commission on Ministry. Present at the gathering were staff from the national headquarters, including President and General Minister Geoffrey Black. The conference was organized to respond to the changing shape of the UCC.

Twenty years ago, of the 38 conferences, only a handful were not considered to be viable, and a these were "small-member large-geography" conferences. The Southeast Conference at the time had the smallest membership, and organizationally was the most fragile. Today fully one-third of UCC conferences are functioning with only a conference minister and a support staff person, and many are unable to sustain viable ministries. In light of these changes, there has been a movement to encourage meetings to explore ways of collaboration that would be of mutual benefit to all.

In our Florida meeting we lifted up our strengths, noting that our identity is a significant asset in a region where some Christians have a reputation for exclusion and intolerance. It was further pointed out that new church development and new affiliations across our region have strengthened our conferences significantly. As the meeting progressed we also lifted up areas in which we could collaborate to the mutual benefit of all. We agreed that to undertake a campaign around our identity as a progressive, inclusive, united and uniting voice in the South would be a good place to begin. Other priorities included strengthening our youth ministries, using technology more effectively, financial development and management, and working together in the education of clergy and laity for

UCC News

UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

Wisconsin UCC reaches elderly members through 35 years of radio broadcasts

With more than half of the congregation unable to attend church every Sunday because of illness, disability or just general old age, the church takes its message to the airwaves to make sure that even its members who can't be present can hear worship service and remain involved.



Southeast Conference FAQ's

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ministry.

It was noted that each of our conferences is passing through reconfigurations of staffing and this might be an opportune time to explore sharing staff and resources. The national setting of the church has just gone through a major restructure, and in the course of that process the question was often raised concerning restructure in other settings of the church, notably conferences.

At the end of the meeting there was a commitment to continue the conversation, and an expression of enthusiasm for the possibilities that lay before us.

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